



**BRIEFING: MARCH 8, 2016 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #2**

**TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members**

**FROM: Margaret Cederoth, RDP Sustainability Manager**

**DATE: March 8, 2016**

**RE: Consider Approving an Updated Sustainability Policy**

---

**Background**

The Authority Board has committed to delivering the high-speed rail program in a way that provides near-term mobility, employment and air quality benefits while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainability, or the consideration of environmental, social and financial impacts for both current and future generations, is a guiding principle for the Authority. Sustainability is considered and applied to every element of the high-speed rail program across the project delivery timeline.

In order to consolidate its range of commitments to environmental and social goals, the Authority issued a sustainability policy in 2013. The policy identified five priority areas:

- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Energy
- Station Communities and Ridership
- Natural Resources
- Business and Management

The five priorities organize dozens of sustainability actions and commitments across the program, from planning, siting, designing, construction, operation, and maintenance of the high-speed rail system.

To develop its initial policy, the Authority relied on State regulation, global sustainability best practices, and international high-speed rail best practices. The policy, and its practical implementation to date, has included a number of leading edge public policy and construction practices including:

- Inclusion of sustainability requirements in all design-build contracts (attached) that require contractors to conserve water, recycle all concrete and steel, divert 75% of other waste from landfills, consider recycled materials, use the cleanest available off- and on-road equipment and vehicles, and comprehensively report to the Authority;

- Planning for procurement of renewable energy;
- Development of a greenhouse gas emissions sequestration and reduction program;
- Development of design criteria for net-zero energy, LEED Platinum stations and facilities;
- Exploration of opportunities to advance sustainability at the district scale within station areas;
- Researching major materials and identifying means to improve the environmental quality of those used on high-speed rail infrastructure; and
- Assessments of climate risks

Since 2013, the Authority has received feedback from stakeholders on its sustainability policy and implementation. In addition, recent Executive Orders by Governor Brown and state legislation have provided further sustainability direction and requirements. Staff is now returning to the Board with a more robust sustainability policy that directly addresses these requirements.

### **Prior Board Action**

In January 2012, the Authority board received the strategic energy plan and sustainability framework.

In March, 2012 the Board approved the release of the CP1 Request for Proposals (RFP). This RFP included general provisions that constituted the requirements, as well as recommended practice, to implement elements of the sustainability framework (Attachment General Provisions CP4). These requirements have been included in all subsequent construction procurements.

In September 2013, the Chief Executive Officer signed a sustainability policy documenting the range of implementation actions taken to meet the Authority's sustainability aspirations as well as satisfy State policy and industry commitments.

### **Discussion**

The Authority completed a materiality assessment in 2015. A materiality assessment is a stakeholder engagement exercise designed to define areas of relevance and importance on sustainability topics and indicators. This assessment revealed that the most important topics for reporting purposes are: greenhouse gas emissions; community benefits; energy; water; health and safety; institutional and employee issues; and land use.

In 2014 the California legislature passed SB 862, which continuously appropriated 25% of future greenhouse gas reduction funds to the project. In April 2015, Governor Brown issued Executive Orders (EO) B-30-15, which complements the earlier EO B-18-12. These directives require state agencies to consider climate change in planning and investment decisions and to purchase environmentally preferable products, among other actions.

Given all of these recent advances, the Authority's policy and identified commitments and priorities should be updated. Proposed updates to the policy and implementation requirements include:

- Expanding actions and commitments related to near-term greenhouse gas emissions mitigation and reduction,
- Climate change adaptation planning and research,
- Refining design criteria, and
- Refining specifications and contract provisions to optimize the life-cycle impacts of major construction materials.
- Clarifying how the program delivery maximizes near- and long-term benefits to disadvantaged communities.

The Authority will also provide an annual sustainability report, highlighting achievements and progress toward targets, beginning in March 2016.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Board adopt a revised sustainability policy to optimize the sustainability of materials used for construction and expand greenhouse gas emissions mitigation and reduction, among other actions, in response to recent stakeholder feedback, Board direction, executive orders, and applicable regulations.

It is also recommended that the Board direct the CEO, or designee, to do the following:

1. Revise specifications and contract provisions to optimize materials life-cycle scores and other stated Board objectives;
2. Develop a means of scoring procurement submittals that demonstrate compliance with the Authority's sustainability policy;
3. Develop a baseline of the materials currently being installed for the project to determine their environmental characteristics;
4. Carry out information sessions with industry providers and contractors;
5. Complete climate change vulnerability research and develop appropriate mitigation and adaption strategies; and,
6. Report to the Board and public on the overall impacts of implementing sustainable infrastructure principles in the high-speed rail program, and how such a program furthers the state's low carbon goals.

### **Attachments**

- Draft Resolution #HSRA 16-05
- Draft Update to the Authority Sustainability Policy, February 2016
- Authority Sustainability Policy, September 2013
- Contract General Provisions, CP4